

REMARKS

The Applicant has reviewed and fully considered the March 31, 2008 Office Action received in the above-referenced application.

Claim 3 are objected to for failing to properly refer to an antecedent basis for the element “one or more cogs.” Claim 3 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests the object to Claim 3 be withdrawn.

Claims 3 through 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carlson (2003/0056623) in view of Stogner (USPN 6,505,531). Claim 3 has been amended to include the limitations of “encircling the pipe length with a non-segmented drive ring of the power tongs” and “encircling a pipe string with a non-segmented housing of the backup tongs.” The Carlson and Stogner both use power tongs and a backup tongs that must be wrapped around the pipe and pipe string. This differs from the present invention as found in Claim 3 which encircles the pipe and pipe string with a continuous and non-segmented drive ring and backup tong housing. Neither Carlson nor Stogner teach these limitations.

The Applicant therefore respectfully requests the rejection of Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 4 through 6 all depend either directly or indirectly from Claim 3. As such they contain all of the limitations found in claim 3. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests the rejection of Claims 4 through 6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

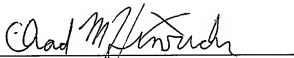
Newly presented Claim 8 contains all of the limitations found in the original Claim 3 and the additional limitation of “locking the back-up tongs to the one or more guide columns.” None of the cited prior art recites this limitation. As such the Applicant believes Claim 8 and its dependent claims are patentable.

The Applicant believes they have addressed all the outstanding issues and that the application is in condition for allowance and therefore respectfully request such.

Applicant believes no fees are due with this response. However, if this is not the case, any necessary fees should be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1971.

Should any other amendments be necessary to place the application in condition for a Notice of Allowance, Examiner Muller is invited to call the undersigned at the below noted telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad M. Hinrichs", is written over a horizontal line.

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